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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 001292

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD
NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA;
DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DRL FOR A/S CRANER;
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [GZ](#)

SUBJECT: THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND: MARCH 2, 2004 (1400
HOURS LOCAL) -- ARAFAT ADVISOR ASSASSINATED IN GAZA BY
PALESTINIAN GUNMEN

THIS IS A JOINT MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY TEL AVIV AND CONGEN
JERUSALEM.

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary: Arafat advisor for human rights and media issues Khalil al-Zaben was shot and killed March 2 by unknown Palestinian gunmen in Gaza City. One settler was injured March 2 after Palestinians fired a mortar on Neve Dekalim. In the West Bank, the IDF killed one Palestinian March 1 near Hebron, during a siege of the house of a suspected terrorist, and one IDF soldier was wounded in a stone-throwing incident near Bayt Ummar the same day. End Summary.

West Bank

[12.](#) (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: The IDF March 1 killed one Palestinian in Yatta village, south of Hebron. The incident came as the army besieged a house, in which it suspected a terrorist was hiding. When someone ran out of the house, the troops shot and killed him. Press reports indicated that he was not the target of the operation. Later, the army destroyed the house and imposed a curfew on the village.

-- Injury: The IDF March 1 injured one Palestinian in Burkha village, near Nablus, during clashes that erupted when Israeli forces mounted an arrest operation in the village that netted three arrests.

-- Injury: Palestinians March 1 injured one Israeli soldier in Bayt Ummar when they threw stones at troops patrolling the village.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen March 1 mounted two shooting attacks near Ramallah that caused no injuries but did damage one Israeli car. Two other shooting incidents the same day, one near Homesh and the other near Shaked, likewise caused no injuries.

[13.](#) (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- The IDF March 1 arrested three Palestinians in Burkha village, near Nablus.

[14.](#) (SBU) DEMOLITIONS:

-- The IDF March 1 demolished three families, tents in Al Khader village, near Bethlehem. The families had set up the tents on the site where their homes had stood until the IDF demolished them a few weeks ago. Reports indicated that the demolitions were carried out because the houses (and then tents) overlooked Route 60, a road used by settlers. The ostensible reason was a lack of building permits.

[15.](#) (SBU) SETTLEMENT EXPANSION/EVACUATION:

-- Palestinians reported March 1 that settlers in Tekoa had moved barrels, perhaps for a water supply, to a location outside the settlement's boundary.

Gaza Strip

[16.](#) (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Unknown Palestinian gunmen shot and killed Khalil al-Zaben, an advisor to Yasir Arafat on human rights and media issues, early in the morning March 2 in the Sabra district of Gaza City. No group yet has claimed responsibility for the attack.

-- Injuries: One settler was injured March 1 when

Palestinians fired a mortar at Neve Dekalim settlement, according to UNRWA.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that one Palestinian was shot and injured March 1 after soldiers in an IDF convoy on the Karni-Netzarim Road responded with machine gun fire to a Palestinian shooting attack.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that a total of four mortars were fired March 1-2: one at Neve Dekalim, one at an IDF outpost near Khan Yunis, one near Kissufim Crossing, and one southeast of Nissanit. UNRWA reported that three mortars were fired at the Gani Tel settlement March 2.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported a total of four shooting attacks March 1-2: two near Netzarim and two near Khan Yunis.

17. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- The IDF arrested a Palestinian fisherman off the coast of Bayt Lahiya March 1, according to UNRWA.

-- Catch-up item: Arrests: UNRWA reported that the IDF arrested four Palestinians February 29 during searches conducted at the Abu Khouli checkpoint.

18. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/CHECKPOINTS

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open for Palestinians March 2.

-- The Erez Crossing was open March 2, and 9,146 Palestinian laborers crossed into Israel. All workers must be married and over age 35. The Erez Industrial Zone was open March 2, with 3,599 workers entering the Zone.

-- Sufa Crossing was open for Palestinian workers March 2 and 347 workers crossed. Sufa was also open for the import into Gaza of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open March 2 for the import and export of goods into the Gaza Strip.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for Palestinian travelers March 2.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed March 2. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

KURTZER